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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515-1604

March 09, 2006

Honoring the life of Gordon Roger Alexander Buchanan Parks

Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to honor the life of Gordon Roger Alexander Buchanan Parks and to extend my condolences to his family and friends on his death this week.

Mr. Parks was born in 1912 in Fort Scott, Kansas, where he also spent his childhood years. His life was an example of hope, tenacity, courage and accomplishment. He inspired many with thought-provoking photographs and images as seen through his lenses. He captured the poverty of many Americans, highlighted racism, and made us aware of people largely ignored.

He also captured inspiring images of beauty and courage that attested to the freedom of the human spirit. Mr. Parks was a man who found beauty nearly everywhere he went. His work told the story of freedom, of breaking boundaries and of hope in difficult times.

Freedom was, in Mr. Parks' own words, what his work was about. He helped African Americans gain new ground in their struggle for recognition of their civil rights. He helped make America aware of the gang wars within some of our urban cities. And he captured beauty wherever he saw it.

He brought to America many untold stories from other parts of the world, including his famous Life magazine account of Flavio da Silva, the young Brazilian boy suffering from tuberculosis. Like other works of Mr. Parks', his pictures elicited action. Approximately \$30,000 was sent from readers to help bring Flavio to America where he was soon cured of tuberculosis.

Mr. Parks' success was not just in his numerous honors and awards for a lifetime of outstanding work as a photojournalist, author, film director, and musician, but also as an individual who triumphed over racism, poverty and a lack of formal education. Rather than lashing out in anger at the injustice he both experienced and witnessed though much of his life, he chose to challenge the status quo through his photography, his writings and his stories.

Kansans learned many important lessons from Mr. Parks. It took a lot of grace and courage for him to address the injustices of his past, and for that we are grateful. America needs more people who will strive to do good in the face of adversity. Our country and the world are a better place because of his example.

In 1986 Kansas honored Mr. Parks by naming him Kansan of the Year. Then in 1988, President Ronald Reagan awarded him with the National Medal of Arts. More recently, he received the University of Kansas' William Allen White Foundation National Citation for journalistic merit in 2006.

I hope the House of Representatives will quickly pass the resolution in honor of Mr. Parks sponsored by my Kansas colleague, Jim Ryun. It is appropriate that Congress acknowledge his life and many positive contributions to our country.

I hope the memory of Mr. Parks will live on for generations and that his family and friends will find solace in the legacy he leaves behind. May Gordon Parks rest in peace.